THE PETITION OF THE Committee of Kent CONCERNING TITHES,

PRESENTED

To the Honourable House of Commons.

WITH

The Speakers Returne thereto.

Printed in the Yeere 1646.

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To the Right Honorable, the Knights, Citizens, and Burgeſſes in Parliament aſſembled,

The humble Petition of the Committee for the County of Kent,

Sheweth,

THat Your Peritioners doe with all humility and thankfulneſſe bleſſe God for the preſent fruits of your unwearied labours, in the great worke of Reformation: particularly, in the removeall of many and great obſtacles, and hindrances thereof: And for the preſent pledges of your pious intentions, and care for the ſending abroad of an able, pious, and painfull Miniſtery, upon the well ſettlement whereof, udner God, doth reſt the ſtability and firmneſſe of that great and weighty worke.

The ſerious thoughts hereof give occaſion to your Petitioners to bewaile the ſad condition of this County, in reſpect of the uncertain, floting and miſerable condition of our Miniſtery, occaſioned by the very nature, manner, and adjuncts of their ſubſiſtence by way of Tythes, which the experience of thus many ages doth plainly evince to be miſerably attended with theſe enſuing miſchiefes, *viz.*

That for the nature of this ſubſiſtence, It is a very miſtery and

and ſecret, not eaſily without much art, and induſtry attained unto: Namely for the Miniſter to know his dues, demandable, or the Pariſhioners their duties payable; whence ariſeth, that multitude of ſcandalous and vexatious ſuites, and brabbles between Miniſter and People, which doth fill almoſt all the Courts at Weſtminſter, and of late the Juſtice-ſittings in the Country likewiſe with cauſes of this kind.

For the manner of it, reſpecting either the collecting or paying thereof, it is a mutuall ſcourge in the hand of Miniſter and People each to other; If either or both (as too often happens) be covetous or croſſe.

For its adjuncts, the miſchiefs of them will appeare innumerable, if the pregnancy of onely one be but conſidered, namely the unreaſonable diſproportion of Livings, or values of Churches to which they are belonging, whence ariſe theſe inſeparable evils;

1. That moſt unworthy perſons, who by favour or friendſhip, or any ſiniſter waies can get into the greateſt Livings, being once inveſted with a legall right of free-hold for their lives, ſecurely fleece the flocke, and feed themſelves, without feare or care, more then to keepe themſelves without the compaſſe of a ſequeſtration, whileſt others both painfull and conſcionable ſerve and ſterve.

2. That for obtaining of thoſe Livings, we ſee ſuch ſordid compliances with ſuch perſons as have the fatteſt benefices (as they count and call them) in their diſpoſe, ſuch artifices in contriving, making and colouring over Symoniacall and ſinfull bargaines, compacts and matches, ſuch chopping of Churches, and reſtleſſe change of places, till they get into the eaſieſt and warmeſt, and other ſuch like practiſes, not to be named, nor yet to be prevented, or removed, otherwiſe then by plucking up the very root which naturally brancheth out it ſelfe into theſe foreſaid miſchiefes, ſo obſtructive and deſtructive to all Reformation.

All which conſidered, your Petitioners out of their unfained deſires of the happy progreſſe of this great worke of Reformation, whereof without a godly and well ſetled Miniſtery wee can have no hopes, doe humbly ſubmit to the conſideration

of

of this honourable Houſe, the Propoſitions hereunto annexed.

Humbly praying, that thereby or by ſuch other waies and meanes as this honourable Houſe in their wiſedome ſhall thinke fit, a timely proviſion may be made for the peaceable and comfortable ſupport of a pious and painfull Miniſtery in lieu of Tythes within this County, otherwiſe in danger thereby to looſe what hath been already wrought therein towards a Reformation, and ſpeedily to degenerate into the murmuring temper of that mixed multitude among us, ſo lately driven out of Egypt againſt their wils; and whether their returne will not be prevented without a timely proviſion for a ſetled, unentangled godly Miniſtery, whoſe ſubſiſtence and ſupport to be ſuch as may with all due encouragement leave them free to ſerve the Lord without diſtraction, and to give themſelves to the Word of God, and Prayer; And to be onely employed to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, which is the onely way of facilitating to your hands what God hath and ſhall put into your hearts, for his glory and his Churches, and this poore Kingdomes good.

And your Petitioners ſhall daily pray, &c.

Propoſitions humbly preſented unto the honourable Houſe of Commons, for ſetling a maintenance to the Miniſtery in the County of *Kent* in lieu of Tythes, *viz.*

1. THat there be a Commiſſion of inquiry of the yearly value of every Living, propriate or impropriate, within the County, what the Tythes and Profits thereof are reaſonably worth, *communibus annis*, ariſing from the Pariſh, excepting the Glebe Lands.

2. That in the ſame inquiry, a diſtinct return be made of the yearely value of the Glebe Lands in every Pariſh, and to whom they do belong, whether impropaiate or otherwiſe.

3. That according to the ſaid eſtimate of the yearely value of the Tithes and Profits ſo returned by ſuch inquiry, the like yearly ſumme in lieu thereof be annually taxed and leavyed by way of Seſſe upon the particular Farms and Lands within each Pariſh; wherein no Lands now exempt from payment of Tithes, or chargeable with any certain ſumme of money in lieu thereof by particular Cuſtomes, to be charged otherwiſe then according to the ſaid Cuſtomes.

4. That the ſaid yearely ſumme ſo taxed and leavyed, be pay'd halfe-yeerly into one Common Treaſury within the County, to be committed into the hands of ſpeciall Truſtees to be thereunto appointed.

5. That out of the ſaid Common Treaſury be iſſued forth

forth by halfe-yearly payments, to each Impropriator ſuch annuall ſumme, as upon the ſaid inquiry and eſtimate, his Impropriation ſhall be found to amount unto; firſt deducting the halfe-yeerly value of his Glebe Lands according to the ſaid eſtimate thereof returned upon the ſaid inquiry; and alſo deducting the half-yeerly value of ſuch annuall penſions and allowances, as are paid by the ſaid Impropriator to the Incumbent Miniſter in the ſaid Impropriate Pariſh.

6. That out of the reſidue of the ſaid common Stock be likewiſe iſſued forth a halfe-yeerly allowance; ſo far as the ſame will extend, to each Incumbent Miniſter within the County by the ſaid Truſtees, due regard being therein had to the deſerts of the perſon, and his Family-charge.

7. That what additionall proviſions ſhall be thought fit by the Houſe to be made for the ſupply of incompetent Livings within the County, whether out of the Revenues of Deans and Chapters, or by buying in of Impropriations, or otherwiſe, be likewiſe brought into the Common Stock and Treaſury, and from thence iſſue forth to Incumbent Miniſters, like reſpect being had to the difference of their perſons and their conditions, as in the laſt [illegible] clauſe.

8. That [illegible] ſaid Common Stock ſhall extend, a due proviſion [illegible] be thence made in caſe of death, of the Incumbent M[illegible]ſters for the ſupply and maintenance of wife and children.

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The Returne of the SPEAKER to the Committee of *Kent*,

WHo, by order of the House of Commons, did give the Petitioners (the Committee of Kent*) thankes for their former services, and tooke notice of their good affections to the publique; and did acquaint them, That the great businesses of the Kingdome are now instant and pressing upon them, and that they will take the Petition into consideration in due time: and that in the mean time they take care that Tythes may be paid according to Law.*

FINIS.